

# **Electoral Disinformation Tactics in East Africa**

By Adolph Muhumuza



# Electoral Disinformation Tactics

Kenya | Uganda | Rwanda | South Sudan | Tanzania

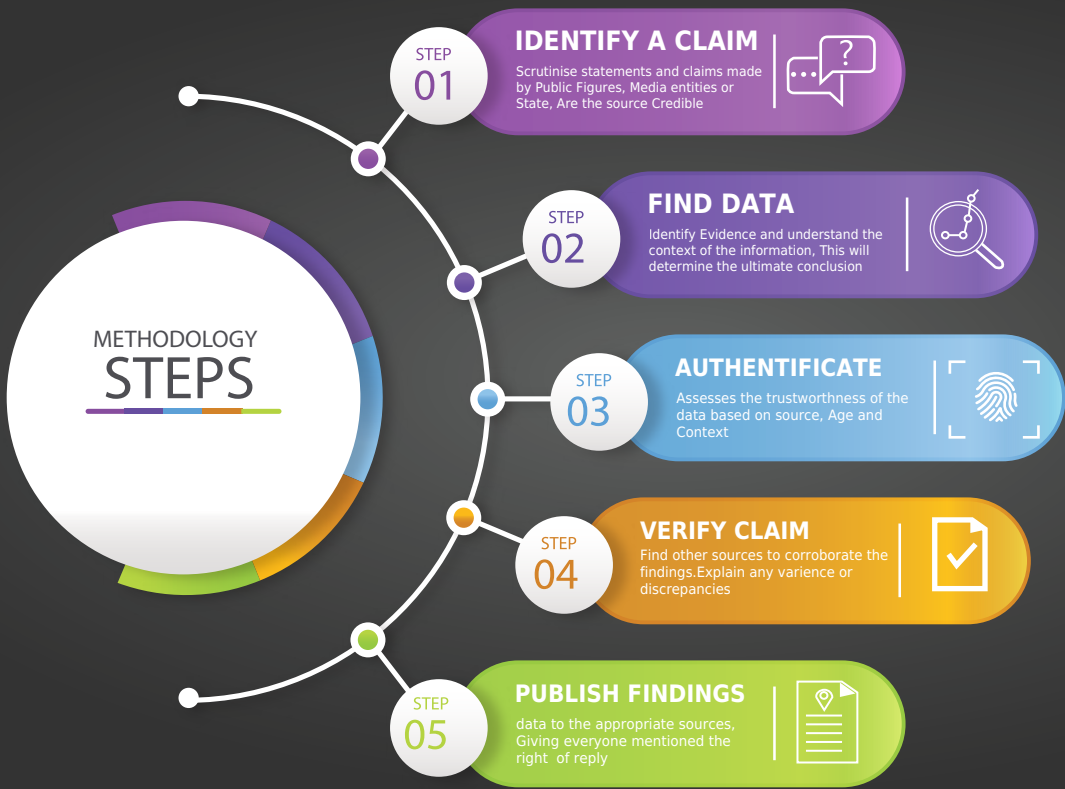


## 1.1 Introduction:

**Electoral disinformation tactics** As social media usage and digital communication proliferate in developing countries including East Africa, so does voter manipulation in digital spaces. The gathering and distortion of data to target and manipulate the voter, the usage and publication of false Data or Data presented out of context or in a wrong context, false information, False digital identities, fake accounts, Fabricated content, Fake news and the like are tools and methods that have proven to have an immense impact on the election process, the electorate and can be decisive in terms of the election outcome.

We conducted a ground survey in **Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan** and **Rwanda**, and we have identified even more challenges of electoral disinformation beyond online sources . In contrast to other parts of the world where electoral disinformation is predominantly consumed online, in Africa, it may unnecessarily involve Governments, Political actors, and Funders. Our survey indicate that electoral disinformation is disseminated through various channels, including person-to-person transmission facilitated by bribes, lack of media literacy, tribalism, Limited literacy levels, false promises, cultural factors, and a lack of training for local leaders, journalists, media companies, and other stakeholders.

## 2.2 Methodology.



## What are some of Fabricated Electoral Disinformation.



Original Publication without altration



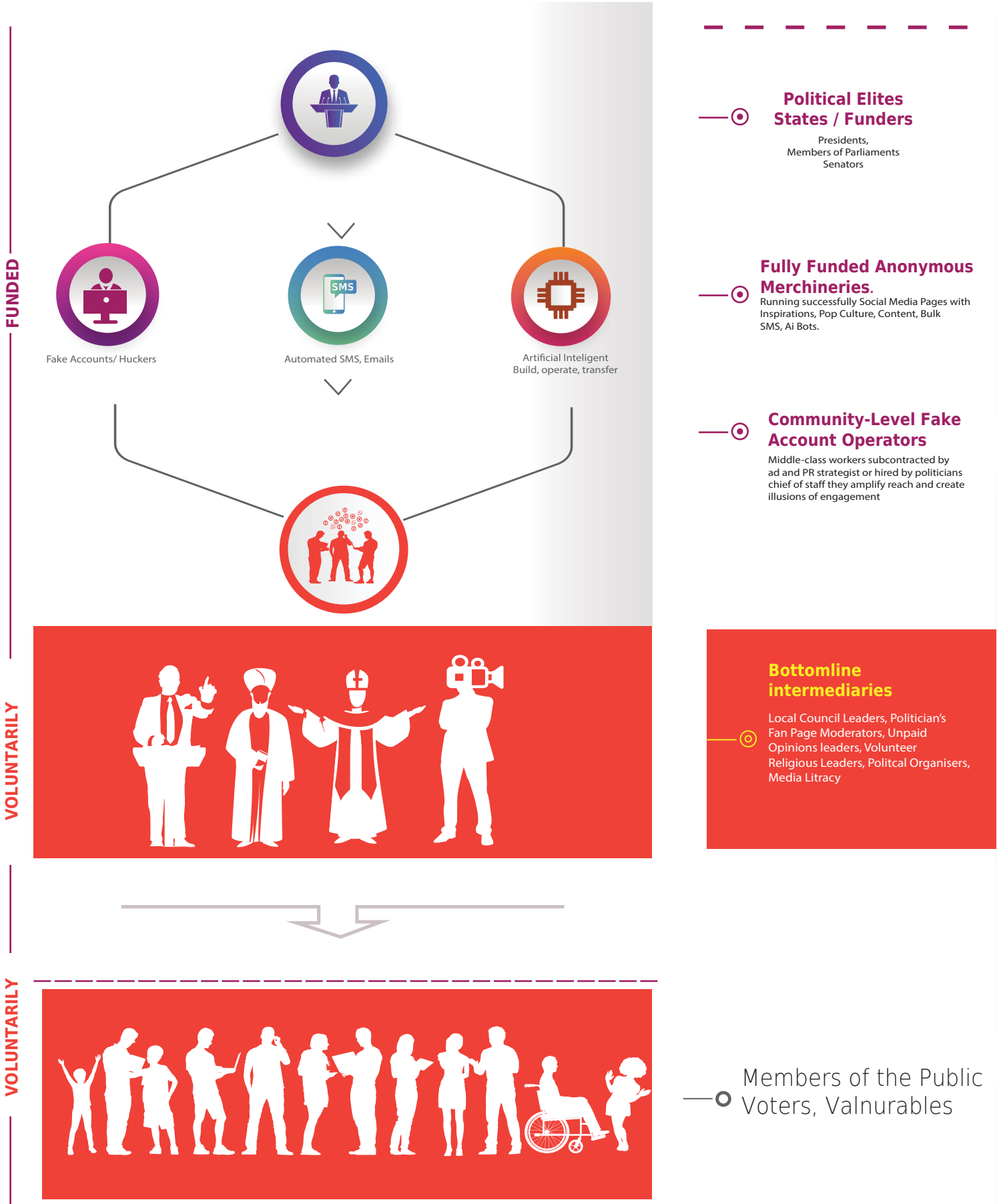
Letter "s"  
Intentionally  
Removed to  
Push false  
Narratives



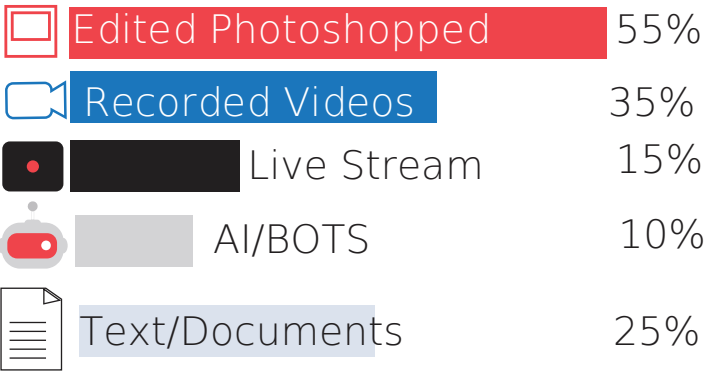




This Infograph shows how Electoral Disinformation is spread from top to bottomline

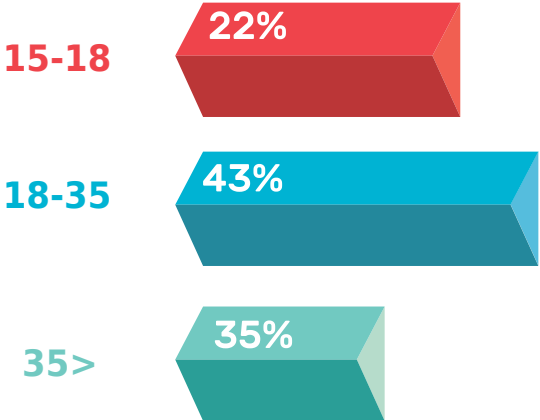


Major Materials used



Source: African Centre for Strategic Studies

Age Landscape



Source: African Centre for Strategic Studies



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## Examples of Electoral Disinformation:

### CHAOS & TENSION:

Abuses included killing by security operatives, beatings and arrests of opposition leaders and voters are common in East African general elections, these incidents put the state of election at tention, disruption of rallies and shut down of internet.



Security Brutality

### FALSE POLLS

During Kenyan General Elections,it was a tight race between Railla Odinga and Dr.Willian Ruto.  
Article published by Kalundu Mary-  
AFP Fact Check-Kenya on 11 August 2022  
Claim to have found false early tallies shared on WhatsApp,Facebook and Twitter.

In a joint statement, Amnesty International and several other civil society groups voiced concern about “the rising levels of false or misleading information being shared on social media a day after the polls closed”  
These incidents were dubunked by AFP Check as felse.



FAKE  
False polls

### FABRICATED CLAIMS

During Uganda's General election of 2021 was a tight race between President Mu-seveni and Bobi Wine real names ( Robert Kyagulanyi)a trending clip was shared widely on social media with a white greyed old man with people claim to be President Joe Biden endorsing Kyagulanyi for President.  
a Team of BBC debunked the video and it was discovered to an event which was held in Boston, and the man speaking was Nick Carter, a Democratic politician who was contesting a local election there, some claims are common during the elections in the region.



Fabricated Claims




## Why Electoral information spreads


- Belief/Trust in officialdom and public figures
- Pecuniary interests –Money
- Digital/ Media illiteracy and high number of unemployed youth
- Poverty –Alternative news sources (low quality, free); alternative treatment
- Politics–Propaganda in the pursuit of power, Foreign Influence Geopolitics (anti-imperialism)
- Religion – False Prophecies about Elections, Religious Differences in pursuit of power.
- The attention economy –chasing the news cycle, we ‘forget’ too fast
- Tribalism powered anger, Divide and Rule system in the countries with multiple ethnic groups or Tribes


## Tips for Spotting Electoral Disinformation

### Skepticism

Use your common sense and always be critical –if a story sounds too good, shocking or unlikely to be true, it probably











http://:www.United Mation-2jshakgfjkhjs922mz

Search







United Nations

Logo & Spelling 

United Nations Pledge full Support to Overthrow President Museveni after 38 Years in Power





Check the address (URL) of a website and take a close look.  
If it is an anonymous website that appears to be authentic,  
Use Wayback Machine to understand how long the website has been existing  
How it has been performing and which type of articles it has been publishing,  
Evaluate and determine whether what you have read is reliable or authentic.



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Facebook



**Muhumuza Adolph**

Covid 19 Information Centre

Pages

Saved

Groups



What is in your mind Adolph?

Photo/Video Tag friends Feeling/Activities



1d.

United Nations Pledge full Support to Overthrow President Museveni after 38 Years in Power, Meeting was seat at the United Headquarters at Washington DC.....[read more](#)

[www.unitedmation.org](http://www.unitedmation.org)



Like 30 Comment Comment

- John Paul

It is Fake Account,"United Nation", Not Mation

21m Like Reply 3k
- Muhumuza Adolph

Fake

Like Reply
- Michael Smith

He's must go, Help us UN

Like Reply
- Rose Mary

Fake

Like Reply
- Michael UG

Fake

Like Reply

## HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE ACCOUNTS IMPERSONATORS

Seeing grammar and spelling errors? and common Mistakes such as UN Headquarters are in New York not DC, Be very suspicious.

Check the address (URL) of a website and take a close look at if the Page is Verified, sometimes Logos and Legit.

Use your common sense and always be critical -if a story sounds too good, shocking or unlikely to be true, it probably is.

When looking at a social media post, read the replies or commentsto see if people are ques-tioning whether it's true.

Check Page Consistency When was it created, What has it been posting in the last 2-5 years, How many followers does have, which type of arti-cles does it usually post.

Visit other credible sourc-es like CNN, Aljazeera, Gov-ernment Websites etc.



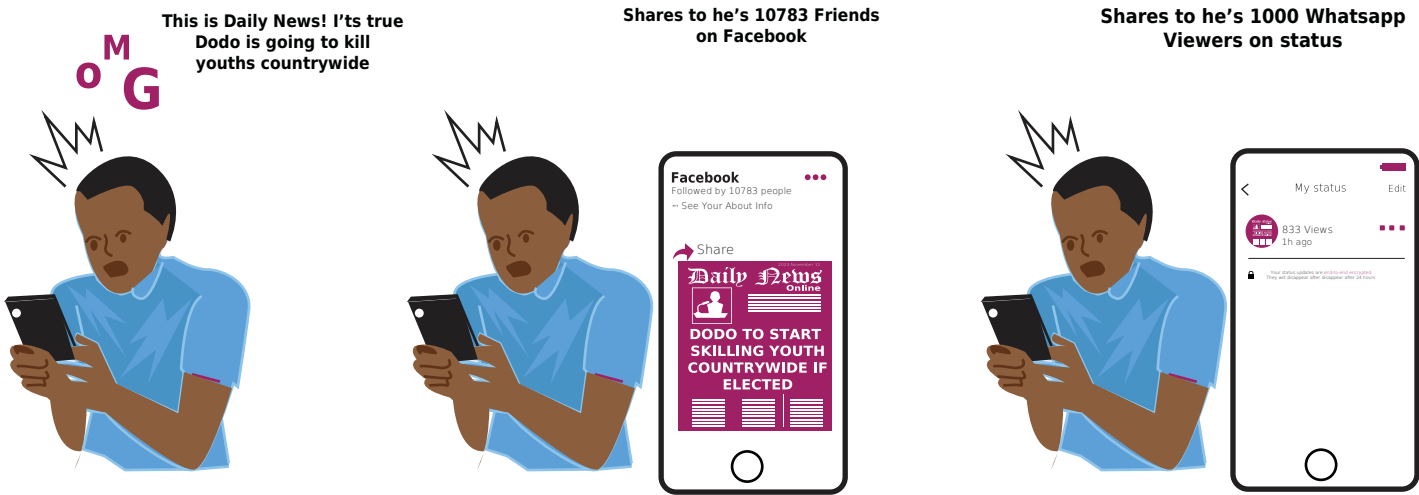
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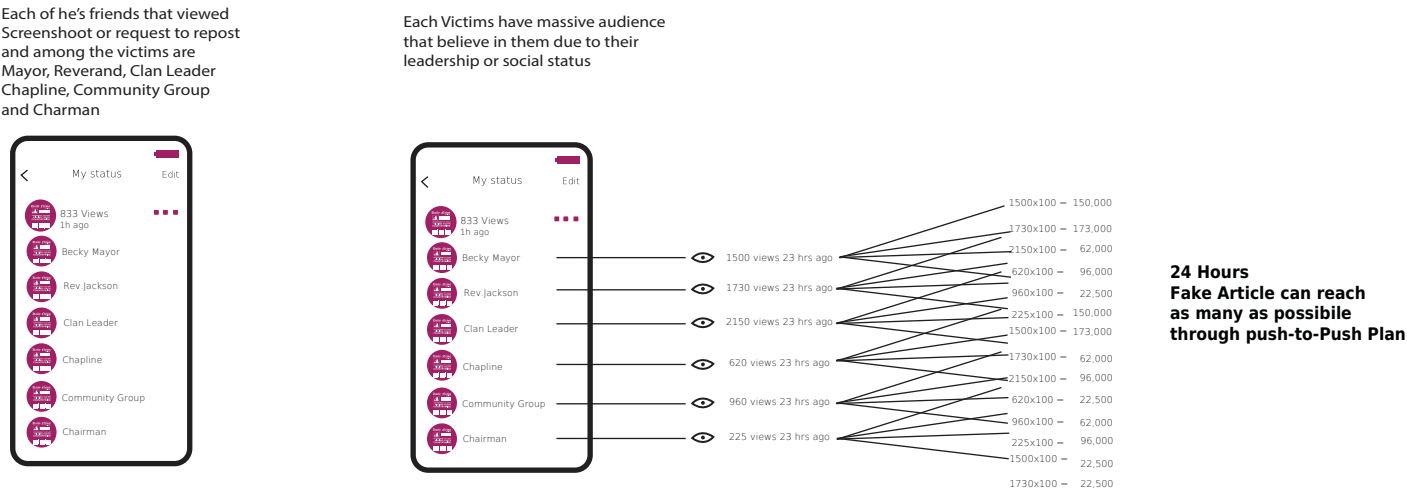


Example of Electoral Disinformation

## How Doe’s this type of Disinformation is pushed online



## Autopilot Spread of Disinformation





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## How Can Electoral Disinformation be disarmed among people without access to Internet

1

TRAIN THE LEADERS

HOW TO STOP ELECTORAL DISINFORMATION?

- TELL EVERYONE ☒
- RUN AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE ☒
- DO NOT SHARE NEWS WITH ANYONE AT FIRST. ☒
- CONTACT YOUR LOCAL LEADER ABOUT THE NEWS. ☒

2

DISARM THE PUBLIC

2

ADVISE THE PUBLIC

SENSITIZE/ PUBLIC AWARENESS

RADIO/POSTERS/VILLAGE BASED TRAININGS OF LOCAL LEADERS

STOP

- Always be Skeptical
- Always ask yourself who has published
- Always Ask for which purpose
- Always Ask for the source.
- Find out if the source is more than one
- Always find out from reliable sources such as Government Website, Verified Media Company, United Nation Website.
- Always give time to share until proven
- Stay Elert when your emotions are triggered



Survey Questionnaire

First Name:

Last Name:

Date of Birth:  Country:

Are illigible to vote in your country?:    YES ☐    NO ☐

Have you ever Voted before?   YES ☐   NO ☐   If yes, How many Times?

Are you on Social Media? If yes Which one?

1. Facebook

☐
2. Twitter/X

☐
3. Whatsapp

☐
4. Tiktok

☐
5. Instagram

☐
6. Others, Specify

What is your major source of Electoral News Updates?

1. Radio

☐ specify
2. Televison

☐ specify
3. Social Media

☐ specify
4. Newspapers

☐ specify
5. Internet.

☐ specify

Who is your most  trusted source of Election News

1. Local Radio

☐ specify
2. Local Televison

☐ specify
3. Social Media

☐ specify
4. International News

☐ specify
5. Religious Leader

☐ specify
6. Local Governement official

☐ specify
7. Cultural Leader

☐ specify
- 8.Political Analyst

☐ specify

When your trusted source provide a questionable piece of information,  
Do you Verify or Not YES ☐    NO ☐

If yes, Who     OR and

Scale of 1 to 10, How much do you trust the sources mentioned above during election time?

/ 10

Do you have any piece of information you questioned from your trusted source during election time? YES ☐    NO ☐

Give some details

Would you like to be an ambasador of Disinformation in your community

YES ☐    NO ☐

Sign

Village

Parish/ Town/ Zone